

on information, distraction, and positive action

the man who could draw looked at his pencil. leaning back on his chair in his room with all his things and such like, he looked long and hard at his pencil. then he looked at his pad. pencil and pad, both of these looks in one step.

and here i am, thinking about a man like this, about what he'd get up to next were i to write it down, you know with words and the like, visualising the movement back towards his desk (yes, he would have a desk), his left index finger dragging dead across the line he had only just finished drawing, only where the line ended his finger would sweep right on past, continue across the paper, the man himself tracing the picture he would have drawn had it not been for his stopping and all, this picture formed already in his head and bearing lightly on his image of last friday or some other day or night. maybe there would be something else, a noise or a smell hending his thoughts elsewhere, not that it would matter anyway. he would have in his memory the trace of that line, and the understanding that once deviated from, the line already drawn might subsist nevertheless, whatever all that would mean and regardless of erasers. and he would think then of the man who could write, before dying at his desk.

the man who could write? well, there's no telling whether he had ever known about the man who could draw. borges would suppose of course, that at some point they had dreamt of each other in one parallel moment, or that one would fall asleep and wake immediately elsewhere as the other, touching his own face in grim anticipation. in any event, the man who could write bore all the signs of weariness. he possessed arguably one of the greatest minds in a century of thought and ignorance of thought, and if you took all the words he had in his head and sentenced them to paper, the entire universe or what we understood of it would end. he would write *you are all the products of what you have become*, and the like. he would write that, and then, with his black 124 10 staedtler aquarell in his hand would score it all out, since he lacked courage and every day saw little more than consequence in the mirror. so whatever the cause it was weariness which resulted, and the man who could write simply wrote no more.

so what do *you* care? you could take this book you've been reading, rip it page by page, fold each of those pages into quarters and rip them again, over and over, and the sum of papers left dangling in the breeze like whispered ignorance wouldn't come close to the number of times you've passed them by. the man who could draw, the man who could write. i know you've seen them. slowly loosening their tie on the bus, darkening supermarket aisles with their wheeze and their imprisoned fears, licking stationery shop windows like dejected miscreants and don't think they can't see you. to them, each one of you forms the colourful stars which dazzle their eye when they throw up, and if you ever stopped to watch you'd catch them bent against your gaze, one hand grasping their head as though meaning to claw out the very thought of being noticed, like they felt impaled or soiled by the judgement. but you would amble past and over their tortured existence without hesitation, every step taken serving to deepen their cancer to unbearable proportions and no hint of a smile, no degree of emotion from you whatsoever. why should you care? well maybe it's you i'm talking about so you feel you don't have to. but these folk, these pitiful shadows who fail to materialise in my life and in that of others, the chasms of society? they're no less than products. products of our world.

but let me guess - you don't agree. or for that matter, perhaps you're straining your neurons around my poorly constructed metaphors and feel the hook slipping absently from your hands. you may even think that, ok, not only am i some kind of tragic weirdo (you wouldn't be far wrong), but also that because i wrote so brazenly there about *products of our world* and such like, in fact i'm trying subtly, and no doubt without much success at all, to pass myself off as yer man

with one of the greatest minds in a century of thought and ignorance of thought. really? me? so bey, if you've caught on already then of course that's fine, but if we run for the moment with the thought that you want elaboration, some kind of hint that i'm actually *going* somewhere with this, then instead of ripping the book to shreds as previously suggested perhaps you could just put it down, walk out the door and look around. right now. step back from your preconceptions, what you've learned in time and can't help thinking and take another look. go on. what you're searching for here is the instant print, a true reflection of what you think epitomises your world and it can be anything at all, but in this, be as positive and truthful as you can because the image you eventually settle on, whether it's

the man on the street,



the things you see him buy,



the architecture he studies,



the love he shares with others



or so on, i hope will end up being what your memory calls up, what you look to and re-assess if you're sane enough to finish this book. what would i search for? like i said, the man who could draw, or could write, teach or at the very least sit his fat arse down and learn but who never will. there can be no more genuine a proclamation as to how much the world has evolved over the years than the behaviour of humanity, its greatest living organism and don't doubt it for a second, what a cradle of zombies we've become. but hey, stick with me here because it's more than that. all i want you to consider after reading this, what i hope you'll close the curtains and apply some time to is the possibility that there's a *reason* for our being so atrociously indolent all the time, that actually, when you think about how much in the world we just accept without question, millions of us in a row bent vacantly over the remote or plugged online, there could just be a chance that we're all being helped along the path a little, that we have a bit less freedom than we thought. i say *after* reading this, because i'll take a leap and guess that most of those you find out there in your world, well, raise your head again and look at them. see? do you think they actually feel in control of their lives? you know, feel that where they are now, where they plan to be in years to come has much to do with them? well, of *course* they do. but think they're walking past you there wondering about all the wars and atrocities being carried out in their name day in day out, how their taxes kill millions and help millionaires make a killing? think they understand the democracy they might vote for, and spend any longer than a heartbeat bothering their arse whether it means more than the split-second soundbite that caught their attention? if you do, then think again. seriously. in every statement you glimpse being made right there in front of you, all the love, the hate, the fashion, hard graft, sporting prowess, thievery and whatever else, you'll see and know that it's everything you ignored yesterday, just hordes of people living out their lives as though in some industrial matrix, contentedly oblivious as to what makes them tick, what steers them each day towards their pre-packaged resolution. bet you're not one of them though, right? i

bet you think what you've done in your life's truly been worth it, been more than just some stone coming to rest on a river bed having failed to alter the current. and hey, i bet you think you're nothing like the innocuous homogenised ghouls walking around you all wrapped up as much in themselves as in their cheap tracky bottoms. well kid, you *all* wrong. we're anything *but* different. we all want pointed in some direction once in a blue moon and we all find solace sitting on the hog, even kings and tyrants and the miserable shop assistant eyeing your cash like it's diseased. what's more evident is that every single one of us dies and no-one, not one soul has the faintest idea what happens next, not even hawking with his superstrings and his wacky m-theories. and yes, i could go on but i'll stop short and say merely that it all comes down to one commonly denounced fact, that we're all in this together. you and me, pal. you and me but keep looking. on the street, in your home, in all the places you can until you start coming across as shady and then look some more. you may come to acknowledge that yeah ok, there might be some merit in reminding others about blood and bone and kinship and so on, that if we came together we could give the nasty a rest and turn the satellites from the war zone to the ozone (see wot i did there?), but you could also surmise that you'd be just as well nailing yourself to a cross as your valiant words would be no less futile than farting against thunder. just a big bag of bananas. you might catch yourself accepting that for most in our world, and in this i exclude those way out east more yellow or brown than myself, living in a state of freedom and democracy really means nowt but digital tv, more than one car in the drive, the reassurance of others worse off than ourselves and of those who guard us at night. in short, whatever makes it unnecessary to think, to look past the end of our own nose. and i've got to tell you, with the information we've got to work with the lack of concern about such tragic misapprehension is hardly surprising.

of course, none of this will be news to those of you out there who concern yourselves with such matters, but knowing what you've come to know, what have you done about it? and if you've done anything at all, is that you finished then? it's like, i look around, without a doubt of course just as you've been doing as i asked all this time (*yeah whatever pal, just get on with it!*) ...and i understand that we all have our little problems, things wot make us drihhle in frustration, but it never stops amazing me that we also have our dreams, our many visions of equality yet we let them dissolve so easily into the narrative we're given, the acceptance of life as it is, and despite how rebellious we might feel in our youth, whatever – or more to the point, whoever's – thoughts we hijack or clothes we wear in the tragic hope of being classed as something meaningful, something unique, nine times out of ten we toe the line anyway, go on to follow this *vagrant* market trend evolving robotically into dank intellectual layabouts, our prime motive in life to aspire to a job that pays the bills, that might even help some folks but still greases the ever-turning wheels of state that drive us to distraction. or even worse, we stain our days and nights with moronic endeavour as we set out defining ourselves merely by our vocation and less, as, well let's face it, we bleat like demented sheep at the mess we're in that, for the sake of sheer convenience, we could have cleaned or prevented ourselves. still looking around? just watch us nurturing the line, marching soldierly down any given career path simply because we feel sure of the momentum, our place in society. then catch us being led after every turn whether we want to or not, to an office block hell of dead ends and wishful thinking, our philanthropy hung up absently on a peg until the telethons begin crowing. this, or we curl up in a ball and beg and steal or fight and however it comes about, at some point we'll grab a trolley and join the long western queue to the self-service desk. i say "nine times out of ten" of course, in case any of you crazy do-gooders out there believe i'm including you in all this. and hey, if you're happy with the way things are and don't fancy ruffling feathers, or if the love of family and friends is all and everything, fair do's, each to their own and all that, but you can bet your bottomed-out dollar i'll be truly ecstatic if at the very least one of you heads out and googles "chomsky" for the first time after pouring through the book. think i'm making all this up though? think i want to? all you'll find in this wacky book you've been reading is what i've learned, the stuff i must've slept through

at school or on the bbc and had to pummel rocks to uncover, and my hope is that you might fancy putting the distractions aside for a bit, maybe dig a little deeper and share what you find, the truth of our world and how it's kept from us. if you disagree with all this drivel though, or believe I'm just rambling my way through a cesspit of conspiracy, then fair enough because hey, i'll get over it. honestly, i'll get over it. just marvel as i come to terms effortlessly with all the eye-searing paradoxes and tragicomic lies thrown my way every second it takes to turn in shame. watch me cope with it all meaning no

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g no more than a passing interest as we go about our lives. you know, sometimes i wish i had the same information as the man on the street. he gets off with it far too lightly. sometimes when i look where i look i wish i'd been wearing his shades. but it's too late for me. it's all about the information – who has it, what you do about it, who else you choose to bear its weight and now that here i am, *acolyte of the free*, secreted painfully as i was from the lush, cushioned armpit of rupert murdoch, take my example. see if you think it's right, think it fits the suit you've chosen for your world. take the man who could draw, the man who could write. remember them? well what if they had a day job? what if one of them was the haggard fella in overalls we all ignore replacing bog rolls in the public lavvy? no, wait a minute. even better, so what if he was the one who replaces hog rolls in the hogs of the hog roll company? ok? right then. now think about why it is that he could possibly choose to clock in day after day, head bowed, when it's obvious he knows more about shit than the company's executives do. because this fella knows shit like an old friend. he's cleaned it and bagged it and slopped it around his whole life, most of it squeezed out cold each day in the early morning push to the top, the waste we leave behind. well keep thinking. what if the guy was offered the chance to care about that? you know, that the shit we don't need was created specifically to keep him feeling occupied and useful, that his approach to life's been engineered to put a mop in his hands instead of opportunity. do you care about that? should he? because i'll tell you, he returns home every day, this man transparent to us all, with the stench in his pores and the stench on his paycheque and as much as it turns the stomach, his only thought prevalent being that shit smells good.

so then, what if this man who'd gone unnoticed all his life was let in on the information one cold morning? what if someone, or a bunch of someones, who'd waded through the reeking pools on the floor to find the one man born to clean it all up, what if by chance they came across this man, took some time out their day to draw him from the cubicles and impart what they knew, exploring life with him through a different lens? you know, i'm just not sure what might happen next but i'll say something, supposition can be a wondrous tool and i think i'll take a shot. our little fella sitting at home that night, half-cut? well my one premier liquid gold dream of them all would be that there and then, even if it stole but a few seconds from his macro processed pseudo life of conditioned subordination, there and then he would hurp down the last of his beer, lean over as far as he could, switch off the sitcoms and begin to think, begin processing all this new and unfamiliar knowledge and make no mistake, in my dream? if this man who could write looked down then at his greasy, ready-meal gut and finally understood, well, without missing a beat he'd sharpen a pencil, crack his knuckles, and begin conceiving for us all the revolution that would flush with ferocity the shit from our world.

